

Giving up coal overnight brings only import dependence, higher prices, less competitiveness of the economy, loss of jobs.

EPS is not asking for help, but only understanding and support in modernization and development, and that is the support of all actors in those processes, they say from that company.

The green transition of the energy sector went beyond the framework of state institutions and became a hot topic in professional circles as well. Aware of the undertaken obligations, the state is determined to green the Serbian energy, it is only a question of the way, time and primarily the price of that road. Experts agree that there is no universal and quick solution, nor exclusive choices. Serbia is now at an energy crossroads and every wrong move will cost dearly, even several billion euros, primarily for generations to come. That is why the analysis of goals, consequences and costs is the first task for all institutions. A detailed diagnosis is needed, but with the therapy of specific goals, projects, results, not only with mere enumeration and demagogic explanations. It seems to an ordinary person that the easiest thing to say is to close the coal mines and the thermal power plant, and here is the successful green transition in an hour.

“For Serbia, it would be a very expensive transition, the country would depend on electricity imports, which was never the case, even during the most severe crises. With the import of electricity, the price would increase significantly, especially for citizens. EPS would certainly lose its share on the market and the economy would pay the price of the green transition. This would certainly bring down the competitiveness of the domestic economy,” says prof. Dr. Milan Radovanovic, President of the Thermal Society of Serbia.

He adds that energy security and independence would be endangered. Serbia would no longer have its own national resources and electricity generation facilities. It would depend on good will, external influences, market and others that affect the import prices of electricity, it would jeopardize the security of both production and supply.

“My impression is that the European Community has not well assessed the consequences of all these changes. Its directive stipulates, for example, that in ten years, 90 percent of pumping stations should provide chargers for electric vehicles. In addition to increasing the number of people, and thus increasing energy consumption, the transition to an electric vehicle will be an enormous blow to electricity production. Recall that in Europe alone, according to data from 2019, there are 242.7 million passenger vehicles, 28 million ‘minibuses’, 6.2 million medium and heavy vehicles and almost 700.000 buses. For all of them, in addition to the normal electricity needs obtained from RES, an additional source of energy should be provided. How and when? In my opinion, it will not be enough, so it will not be possible to buy electricity,” he claims.

On the other hand, Serbia participates in the world’s population with less than half a thousandth of a share, and roughly speaking with the same number in energy consumption.

“Is the pressure of the Energy Community justified? China participates in CO<sub>2</sub> production, for example, with about 52 percent. Without entering into the justification of all these measures, because something is happening to humanity and it does not know the real cause and is looking for the culprit in ‘CO<sub>2</sub> production’. I’m afraid that this is just one of the usual transient changes in the Earth’s temperature, and even climate change, according to our scientist Milankovic,” he says.

Sudden and unpredictable jumps in electricity prices are happening in the region. The causes of these jumps are easily detected in changing market factors. Weather conditions are throwing wind farms and solar parks out of production and creating major imbalances in energy systems. What is happening in Serbia?

“In our country, balancing EPS ‘irons out’ all renewable sources. How does EPS balance it? Using the safest capacities of coal-fired power plants, which are the most valuable and largest resource in this country. Figuratively, when any wind farm or similar RES plant stops working at least, if the supply problem arises, it would be much easier for the public to accept the considerations that green rushing is not the best energy recipe for Serbia, forgetting that the components of wind farms and solar parks are made from raw materials that come from underground mining operations and complex chemical technological processes,” it is concluded.

So what is good for EPS and Serbia?

“Despite the pressures, EPS continues development projects of building new capacities, modernizing existing and diversifying sources. EPS’s environmental projects prove that it is possible to find a balance between energy and environment while fulfilling its main role in electricity supply,” said Milorad Grcic, v.d. Director of “Electric Power Industry of Serbia”. Thanks to the planned revitalization and modernization of key parts of power plants, the technological reliability of power plants, which are several decades old, is at a very high level.

“We produce enough energy for citizens and the economy, under the most favorable conditions, we invest in development. We are especially proud that we can offer investors energy with a green certificate. This is what foreign companies demand the most, and thus operate in the same way as in the EU,” he said.

The first man of the largest energy company points out that EPS does not ask for help, but only understanding and support in modernization and development, and that is the support of all actors in those processes. So far, it has often happened that those who should be the biggest help are the biggest obstacle.

“EPS has shown that it knows what it is doing, which way it is going and what the goals and directions of development are. The current progress of once stalled investment projects worth more than a billion euros is a real result and an indicator of work and expertise. We fight risks and do not give up EPS’ development,” says Vladimir Markovic, Assistant

Director of EPS and Director of the Key Investment Project Department.

According to him, EPS's ambitions in regional expansion are based on realistic bases, systematic work and approach. In accordance with the state policy of economic development, EPS gives its contribution to the promotion of Serbia precisely through regional projects which, despite all obstructions, can be a recipe for success.

Some lobbies under the guise of the environment seem to want Serbia to have its energy very quickly and to be on its knees every time there is an energy shake in the region and beyond. It seems that anything EPS does is met with a 'knife', advice is of a general type on energy production from RES, for a long time almost 30 percent of total EPS production is also from RES, and in combination with thermal power plants it balances the system and provides security of supply. EPS development plans are criticized even from renewable energy sources again with diagnoses that the new hydropower plants have a negative impact on the environment, although EPS maximally respects all environmental regulations, it is added in the announcement of EPS.

Rich considerate

"It is important to be careful in that green transition, because even richer EU countries did not start this process overnight, as suggested to Serbia. Much richer EU countries have not only EU financial assistance in the green transition process, but also stronger instruments too. In most EU countries, energy balances include nuclear and gas-fired power plants in addition to coal-fired power plants that consume domestic coal resources, and no one has dumped coal in a short period of time. Many countries suffer precisely because of import dependence, and that affects the price of electricity and the competitiveness of the economy," explained Prof. Dr. Radovanovic.

It is clear, he notes, that the green transition is dictated by the EU, but one of the postulates of that EU community is precisely the diversity and respect for national goals and strategies, where energy is of the greatest national interest.

A symbol of security

EPS is a symbol of security for citizens and the economy in all difficult situations, but many forget that it is one of the most valuable state companies. Tens of thousands of people are connected to EPS through work, and the moment when the basic production of EPS would disappear, several dozen workers would be on the edge of existence. EPS does extremely hard work in all conditions, the most difficult summer or winter days. For decades, EPS has been the support for many vocational academic institutes and technical faculties and a kind of center for the integration of technology and science. Experts agree that EPS is one of our largest national economic brands, which through synergy and constructive discussion can find an adequate path and balance in the processes of green transition, it is stated in the announcement, B92 reports.